



Letter from the Administrator

S.C.Delaney/U.S.EPA

Dear Reader:

In December of 1970, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created to solve the nation's urgent environmental problems and to protect the public health. In those days, our pollution problems were obvious. A dark veil of air pollution hung over our cities. Rivers and lakes could not sustain life and even caught on fire. The bald eagle, our national bird, was threatened with extinction by unmonitored pesticide use.

For the past 25 years, the nation has made steady progress on the environment. The EPA -- working closely with state, local and tribal governments -- established a system of public health and environmental protection second to none in the world. Our efforts produced impressive, measurable improvements in the environment that have enhanced the quality of life for every American.

Yet, to report on the nation's environmental accomplishments of the past quarter century is not to say we can't do better.

Many environmental challenges lie ahead. Some of the problems from 1970 have proven to be difficult to solve. Also, by learning more about the environment, we have discovered new problems that must be addressed in new ways. As a nation, our work on the environment must continue. We at EPA enter our second quarter-century committed to providing a cleaner environment, at cheaper cost to the American economy, using smarter strategies of environmental protection.

In the future, we will work to improve monitoring of environmental quality by ensuring that our actions are more cost-effective and based on common sense. We will actively seek the opinions of citizens and state and local officials to be sure that our efforts are meeting real needs.

This report chronicles our environmental progress of the past quarter century and looks towards the challenges ahead. It is dedicated to the thousands of EPA employees, both past and present, who have devoted their careers to preserving the nation's environment.



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